

GOOD SHEPHERD HOUSING FOUNDATION OF PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA, CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the 20th anniversary of the Good Shepherd Housing Foundation. For the past two decades, the Foundation has provided low-cost housing to the homeless and those on the brink of homelessness in Prince William County.

The Foundation was created in 1989 out of the compassion and collective action of the Good Shepherd faith community. The founders identified a need within Prince William County for housing for the mentally ill. They worked with the Prince William County Community Services Board to establish the bedrock of a stable and lasting program. In its beginning, the Foundation provided housing for five single adults.

It has since grown substantially in both numbers of clientele and breadth of mission. Now in its twentieth year, the Foundation provides housing and supportive services for 25 single adults and 18 families in 11 homes owned by the Foundation. Assistance has been extended to those with chronic low income, mental and physical disabilities, AIDS/HIV, pregnant teens and the elderly. The organization is sustained by the efforts and donations of individuals, businesses and churches, and it receives assistance from local, State and Federal funding.

The Shepherd Homes Program offers group living and single adult housing options to mentally ill individuals. Shepherd Homes I, II and III are properties owned by the Foundation that function as group homes. Ten apartments leased by the Foundation offer the mentally ill, some who are veterans, relief from chronic homelessness. Beyond housing assistance, the Foundation offers services that put residents on a path to financial and psychological stability.

Since its inception, the Foundation expanded its mission to include low income families. The Affordable Family Housing Program is a holistic program aimed at providing housing and teaching families the importance of education and financial management. Families are given transitional, two-year or long-term, low-cost housing. Tutoring is available for the children and parents receive financial counseling. The Foundation works to end chronic homelessness by providing immediate relief and preventing future generations from falling into this dangerous condition.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in expressing appreciation for the work the Good Shepherd Housing Foundation does in the Prince William community. The Foundation exists today as a robust and effective community organization dedicated to helping the disabled and less fortunate. I offer my unconditional support for its mission and commend its ability to help our fellow man.

CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL OF DIWALI

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Festival of Diwali.

Over one billion individuals celebrate the cultural and religious holiday of Diwali each year. Diwali is one of the most joyous festivals celebrated on the South Asian subcontinent. The festival is celebrated in the Hindu, Sikh, and Jain traditions, and has cultural significance for South Asians. Within the United States there are over 2 million celebrating Diwali making it a significant holiday in our country.

Diwali literally means "The Festival of Lights," translated from Hindi. Celebrations of Diwali usually involve the lighting of lamps to symbolize hope and joy. I joined Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the White House yesterday, as President Obama lit a lamp in the White House in the observance of the festival, after signing an executive order restoring the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

In the Hindu faith Diwali is often linked to Rama's triumphant return following his victory over Ravana as told in the epic The Ramayana. Following Rama's victory his people lighted lamps along the capital city to celebrate as their King returned. The clay lamps which the people lit, were called Deepavalis which Diwali is a shortened version of. In many Hindu calendars Diwali corresponds with the start of a new year. Diwali is one of the most significant holidays within Hinduism.

In Jainism, Diwali marks the date upon which Lord Mahavira achieved the state of absolute bliss or Nirvana. It is said that King Chetaka, upon Lord Mahavira achieving Nirvana, light a multitude of lamps to create a material light to replace the light of intelligence that had been lost.

In the Sikh tradition, the foundation of the Golden Temple is said to have been laid on Diwali. In this tradition, the 6th Sikh guru Hargobind was released from prison on the festival of Diwali.

There is great diversity among the faiths that celebrate this joyful holiday. Across all these traditions, Diwali holds significance across the South-Asian community as a time of hope, happiness and the renewal of life. I am very proud to have been a co-sponsor of House Resolution 798, conveying the best wishes of the House of Representatives to those celebrating Diwali. The resolution recognizes the importance of Diwali and extends the House of Representatives' deepest respects to all those celebrating Diwali. I would like to join with all those celebrating this joyous time and wish Shubh Diwali to all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I was absent on Wednesday, Octo-

ber 14, 2009, due to a previously scheduled event. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" during the recorded votes for the following five bills:

1. H. Res. 768—Expressing support for the designation of the month of October as "National Work and Family Month";

2. H.R. 1327—Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009;

3. H. Res. 816—Mourning the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009, in American Samoa and Samoa;

4. H. Res. 786—Commemorating the canonization of Father Damien de Veuster, SS.CC., to sainthood; and

5. H.R. 3371—Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act of 2009.

IN RECOGNITION OF ESTRELLA CLEMENT IN HONOR OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, I rise today to honor Estrella Clement, who dedicates her life to help identify and treat women who have breast and cervical cancer.

Ms. Clement was born in Cuba, moved to New Jersey as a child and has been living in Tampa for 25 years. Ms. Clement always knew she wanted to be a nurse and help improve the health of her community. She obtained a master's degree in nursing from the University of South Florida and has been a nurse for more than 32 years. Ms. Clement works with Meditech Medical Center clinics where free mammogram tests, breast examination, and Pap smears are offered to women who might not be able to afford these services otherwise.

Tirelessly dedicated, Ms. Clement worries that women are unaware of the free screening and treatment options in her neighborhood. Transportation is a major obstacle for many low-income women. Ms. Clement's goal is to have a mobile unit so she can go directly to the community. Unfortunately, too few people know about the free service. Ms. Clement is making it her duty to reach as many women as possible.

Ms. Clement also has been a co-chair of Prime Time Sister Circles, a group that helps African-American women improve their health, and she has served on the Moffitt Cancer Center's Hispanic Advisory Council.

Madam Speaker, Estrella Clement is acutely aware of the toll, both financial and emotional, that breast and cervical cancer can have on women. She devotes her life to improving the health of the Tampa community. I applaud her dedication to the prevention and treatment of breast and cervical cancer.